

NEW MUSIC CONCERTS

in collaboration with the Faculty of Music
University of Toronto

present

Les Percussions de Strasbourg

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In 1961, six percussionists who had each received musical training at the Conservatoire National de Paris, were reunited in Strasbourg through their individual positions with the Philharmonic Orchestra of Strasbourg and that of the O.R.T.F. They decided to create an ensemble.

Their objectives: To develop percussion instruments in every significant, modern way, by presenting through a contemporary musical language a repertoire conceived exclusively for them, based on the permanent creation of 'living' music.

In 1961 one work constituted the repertoire of **Les Percussions de Strasbourg**. Today they plan their programs from some sixty-three compositions, most of them created for the ensemble. In the twelve years of their existence, this highly-renowned group of players has performed over 800 concerts in most centres of the world. They have participated in at least 40 international festivals, many television programs, and have numerous recordings on the commercial market.

1973 is the occasion of the second North American tour of **Les Percussions de Strasbourg**, which takes the six members "In Première" coast-to-coast in Canada from mid-October until the end of November with some one-and-a-half tons of musical instruments.

SHEN (1969) by Tona Scherchen

Ms. Scherchen was born in Neuchâtel, Switzerland in 1938. At the Peking and Shanghai Conservatories, she studied Chinese music and literature as well as classical Chinese instruments. She returned to Europe in 1961 to pursue her interest in dodecaphonic music at the Salzburg Mozarteum, and spent two years working with Henze. She then left for Paris, where she studied with both Olivier Messiaen and Pierre Schaeffer until 1965. Her formal education concluded with a year in Vienna under the guidance of Legeti.

“**SHEN** is an attempt to penetrate the mysteries and profundities of life. It presents itself first in the solemn aspect of RITE, of MYSTERY; to the RITE is opposed its complementary duality, the element of a gay, merry dance. Above the beating of a Chinese drum — like the beating of a heart, the Rhythm of Life — are gradually built up ‘exterior influences’:

the sound of metal, the sound of membranes
the sound of wood, the sound of grain flowing
the sound of stone, the sound of silence.

The rhythm becomes stronger and accelerates until the explosion — almost Death — of total Ecstasy; there remains only the gentle sound of a little tail wriggling.

The composer of **SHEN** sought merely to write music; listeners may ‘interpret’ it as they like.”

— Tona Scherchen

ZODIAQUES

by Janos Komives

Born in Budapest in 1932, Janos Komives received his early musical education in Hungary, where in particular he was a pupil of Zoltan Kodaly. He then went to Paris to work with Darius Milhaud, and there he pursued his activities as both composer and conductor.

ZODIAQUES — or as it will please you . . .

One can believe — or not believe . . .

One can wonder, become indignant — or remain skeptical, blasé . . .

It is nonetheless true that the 12 signs of the Zodiac, as old as Humanity, continue to interest both men and women, young and old, poor and rich, educated and uncultured . . .

Some are driven by the hope of discovering a fragment of the secret of their future . . . Others seek to find a combination of numbers, to bet on an easy fortune . . . Others again take pleasure in superstition, to see by provocation, to attach themselves to some key or other gadget of modern life . . .

Finally, there are certain persons for whom this wonder and inexhaustible kaleidoscope is above all one approach — certainly not scientific, but most of all 'artistic' — to the human race:

- a symbolic method in psychology, based on 12 archetypes and their possible interdependence. (Jung)
- a kind of card game — 12 cards only, but innumerable plays. (Goethe)

The work is in the form of a 'suite' of 12 pieces, each one dedicated to one of the 12 signs of the Zodiac.

In a traditional performance, the chronology of the 12 signs follows the cycle of the seasons, from Spring to Winter. However, this order can be altered and permuted freely by the players. To give a spatial dimension to the work, the 120 instruments used — of skin, metal and wood — are distributed on 12 levels, in two complementary hexagons, which constitute an imaginary 'astral chessboard'.

Each of the six musicians move to three of the twelve positions, each time playing different instruments. Their respective positions on the 'chessboard' create different constellations (optical as well as acoustical) in relation to the 12 signs, with their symbolic value and above all, with their graphic representation.

— Janos Komives

(The composer is a native of Sagittarius)

PERSEPHASSA (1969)

by Iannis Xenakis

Iannis Xenakis was born in 1922, of Greek parents, in Braïla, Rumania, on the Danube. Along with his musical studies Xenakis pursued a scientific education that took him to the Polytechnic School at Athens, from which he graduated in 1947. He then left Athens for Paris, where he continued his musical studies under Honegger, Milhaud, and Messiaen. At the end of 1947 Xenakis was invited by the French architect, Le Corbusier, to work with him on a number of important projects, an association which lasted for the next 12 years. In this field Xenakis distinguished himself by his design of the Philips pavilion at the 1958 World Exhibition in Brussels.

From 1955 onwards, Xenakis introduced into music the conception of 'clouds' and 'galaxies' of events of sound, and calculus and the theory of Probabilities under the name of Stochastic Music. Later he made use of the mathematical theory of Games which he refers to as 'Strategic Music', and finally the theory of Sets and mathematical Logic which he calls 'Symbolic Music'.

In 1965, Xenakis became a French citizen.

PERSEPHASSA: The archaic name of Persephone or Core, goddess of the renaissance of nature in Spring and also of Hades (thus the wife of Pluto); the personification of telluric forces and of transmutations of life, to be compared with the cults of Adonis, of Dionysus, of the Corybantes, of Rhea, in which animal and human sacrifices were still rather frequent. The cosmic cycles defined in this way refer as well to the cycles in living species and particularly in man, being based upon the period, the iteration, the very essence of the theory of numbers and of mathematics.

This is the deep-seated reason for the role of percussion instruments, which also symbolized telluric and celestial activities (the father of Dionysus is often given as the thunder-wielding god Zeus). But aside from the magic, religious relationship with percussion instruments, I propose another reason for the name of this piece as a hypothesis in need of verification. The etymology of Persephone is multiple and has been interpretative since antiquity. I should like to consider the root PERS or PARS of this name, momentarily neglecting the PHASSA or PHATTA part; the cult of Persephassa belongs to that of the larger family of divinities enumerated above of Anatolian, Semitic, Iranian and Indus Hindu (Dionysus) origin. We also, however, know the Greek myth of Perseus, who is considered the ancestor of the Achaemenidae kings. Here there is certainly a trace of the passage of the archaic contacts of the Persian branch that crossed the Bosphorus from Europe and spread across the Aegaeon. I should like to link Persephassa with this very distant lineage of the Persians (notice the identity of root of the words Achaeans and Achaemenidae). It is likewise probable that the Celtic cycle of PERCEVAL or PARSIFAL indicates a Persian outpost in Western Europe that has otherwise left little or no trace.

Finally, since this piece was first performed in PERSEPOLIS — despite its destruction a tremendous centre of culture across thousands of years: in ancient times, in the Hellenistic and Roman period, in the Byzantine and Moslem period, and as a result in the Western European period — I wished to collect all these lines of force into the short title of **PERSEPHASSA**.

The six percussion players perform in a ring surrounding the audience, which is thereby hemmed in by the musical flow. The piece exploits in a new manner the Screen Theory or the logical functions of residue classes modulo m , together with space-sound kinematics, as in Terretektorh, Polytope, and Nomos Gamma.

I also offer new instruments: wooden or metal SIMANTRA (already called for in my Oresteia), the original idea for which came from the simanders of the Greek monasteries, which are gold-mines of

ancestral rhythm still not destroyed by radio, television or the invasions.

This piece for "Les Percussions de Strasbourg" was commissioned by the French Ministry of Cultural Affairs and by the Persepolis Festival, at which it was first performed on September 9, 1969.

— Iannis Xenakis

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 15

MacMillan Theatre

GUEST ARTISTS:

Contemporary Music Orchestra of Paris

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|---|-------------------------------|--------|
| EDGARD VARESE | — | Intégrales | (1934) |
| KARLHEINZ STOCKHAUSEN | — | Kreispiel | (1967) |
| LUC FERRARI | — | Monologos | (1972) |
| MICHEL PHILIPPOT | — | Transformations Triangulaires | (1973) |
| BERNARD PARMEGIANI | — | Outre Mer | (1971) |
| PIERRE BARBAUD | — | Call Note | (1973) |

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1

Concert Hall

GUEST COMPOSERS:

David Bedford, Sten Hanson, Luis de Pablo

- | | | | |
|----------------|---|--|--------|
| STEVE GELLMAN | — | Mythos II | (1968) |
| *STEN HANSON | — | Hello Piano, Hello Room | (1973) |
| *DAVID BEDFORD | — | Pancakes with Butter, Maple Syrup and Bacon, and the TV Weatherman | (1973) |
| *STEN HANSON | — | Extrasensory Conceptions VI | (1973) |
| *LUIS DE PABLO | — | Masques | (1973) |

SATURDAY, JANUARY 19

Concert Hall

GUEST COMPOSER/CONDUCTOR

Sydney Hodkinson

- | | | | |
|--------------------|---|--------------------------|---------------|
| **DAVID FOLEY | — | Cat Music I&II | (1971 - 1972) |
| *SYDNEY HODKINSON | — | Dolmen | (1973) |
| †*SYDNEY HODKINSON | — | Taula | (1974) |
| †*NORMA BEECROFT | — | Rasas III | (1974) |
| *R. MURRAY SCHAFER | — | Arcana (Chamber Version) | (1973) |
| *SYDNEY HODKINSON | — | Another Man's Poison | (1972) |

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23

Concert Hall

GUEST COMPOSERS:

Micheline Coulombe Saint-Marcoux, Karel Goeyvaerts,
Alcides Lanza

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| *MICHELINE COULOMBE SAINT-MARCOUX | — Makazoti (1971) |
| **LASZLO SARY | — Sonanti No. 2 (1970) |
| **KAREL GOEYVAERTS | — Catch à 4 (1970) |
| ALCIDES LANZA | — Eidesis II (1967 - III) |
| KAREL GOEYVAERTS | — Goathemala (1966) |
| **KAREL GOEYVAERTS | — Piano Quartet (1972) |

SATURDAY, MARCH 30

Concert Hall

GUEST COMPOSER:

George Crumb

- | | |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| GEORGE CRUMB | — Microcosmos, Vol. I (1973) |
| GEORGE CRUMB | — Vox Balaenae (1971) |
| GEORGE CRUMB | — Lux Aeterna (1972) |
| GEORGE CRUMB | — Ancient Voices of Children (1970) |

*premiere performance
**Canadian premiere

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